

Investigation 2: Planning for Teaching Study and Practice

Planning, instruction, and assessment are critical tasks for teaching and major areas of your learning this year. The seminar will provide you with guided experiences in curriculum planning, teaching, and assessment with support from your mentor teacher and field instructor. The assignments are designed to encourage conversations between you and your mentor teacher(s) about curriculum, goals for student learning and conceptual understanding of content as you plan and teach two individual learning experiences and then, design, teach and assess a mini-unit. The overall project begins with an analysis of your mentor teacher's planning and teaching. Throughout this project we will be learning to use the planning frameworks presented in *Understanding by Design* by Wiggins and McTighe.

This study has three parts. The third is divided into five subsections.

1. From planning to practice: mini-study of mentor's plan in action

Due: October 8th

2. Co-planning and teaching 2 lessons, followed by systematic reflection

Due: October 22nd

3. Planning, teaching, and reflecting on a mini-unit

Section A, Initial planning of the mini-unit, due: Oct. 29, Nov. 5, Nov. 19

Section B, Revisions and Reflection on Planning, due: November 29

Section C, Teach the mini-unit, between December 1 and 15

Section D, Analysis and Reflection on Teaching, due: December 17

Section E, Mini-unit Fair, due: December 17

Note: As soon as you know your mini-unit topic, begin learning about it and studying it. Even though the first assignment is not due until Oct. 29, the more time you have to learn about and contemplate your subject matter, the better off you will be.

Part 1. Studying Mentor's Practice Due: October 8th

The goal of this study is to understand what happens to plans when they are implemented. If possible, focus on a lesson where your mentor is teaching about something related to text: language arts, *Parashat HaShavua* or *TaNakh*. What happens to plans when they are enacted? When and why do teachers change their plans?

This experience gives you an opportunity to uncover your mentor's planning process and to consider the decisions your mentor makes based on knowledge of the subject, knowledge of students' needs, interests and backgrounds and goals for student learning.

A. "Think aloud" by Mentor Teacher

The goal of this conversation is to understand as much as possible how the decisions the MT makes in planning affect the design of the lesson and hold the potential for promoting desired learning outcomes for students.

- Have MT talk through plans for the lesson to be observed using ***Learning Experience/ Lesson Plan Format*** as a framework for this conversation. After the conversation, you should be able to answer all the questions on the sheet and understand the sequence/timeline of the lesson.
- As you talk to your mentor, try to understand **how** and **why** a particular activity will (hopefully) promote the desired outcomes. Why were those particular learning activities chosen? How do the specific tasks or learning activities enable particular kinds of intellectual work on the part of students?
- As you plan with your MT, think about how knowledge is treated in this lesson. Is it viewed as something fixed and easily transferred from teacher or text to students or is knowledge viewed as something constructed by learners and open to multiple interpretations? How is this reflected in the activities?

B. Observing the Plan in Action

Now that you understand the lesson and its purposes, pay close attention to what happens when the teacher enacts it. As you watch your mentor teach the lesson, take notes on the lesson with the following questions in mind. Be sure to record times for the beginning and end of activities within the lesson.

- What happens to the plan-in-action? Were the plans modified? If so, when, how and why?
- What occurs during the lesson that wasn't anticipated in the plan?
- What evidence did you see that students had or had not grasped the content of the lesson?
- What did you notice about the lesson that couldn't have been anticipated in the planning?
- Did the lesson go as you expected?

C. Learning about MT's Interactive Decisions

Talk to your MT after the lesson. Focus on the difference between the lesson as planned and lesson as implemented. Assume lesson as enacted will be different from lesson planned in some way. The question is – do modifications/adaptations move lesson toward its purpose, change the purpose or undermine the purpose? Use the original write-up of the lesson, the notes you took during the observation and the following questions to guide your conversation.

- What did students do to shape the lesson?
- What did mentor do to modify the lesson? Why?
- Is there anything that your MT wished she/he had taken into account when planning the lesson?
- Did anything happen during the lesson that could not have been planned for? What might account for that?
- Were there any complex and/or unanticipated issues with regard to the content of the lesson? If so, how were they handled?

D. Write-up (3-4 pages)

After the lesson and your conversation, write a description and analysis of what happened to the lesson plan in action.

- Compare the planned lesson to the actual lesson and account for any significant differences.
- What did you learn about the relationship between planning and teaching from this study? What can be taken into account in planning? What aspects of teaching cannot always be planned for?

Please include:

- Original lesson plan (as reconstructed by you using the conversation with mentor)
- Notes you took during the observation. (Xerox is fine. You do not need to type up if handwritten.)

Before our seminar on October 8, email your write-up, the lesson plan, and your notes (if electronic – otherwise turn in at seminar) to Nili, your mentor, and your field instructor. Please title your documents as follows: your name_mentor observation write up.doc, your name_mentor observation lesson plan.doc, your name_mentor observation notes.doc. Also bring these assignments (either on a laptop or a hard copy) to seminar.

Part 2: Your Turn: Co -planning 2 learning experiences/lessons --followed by systematic reflection
Due: October 22nd

Some time during October, with the help of your mentor and field instructor, you will co-plan, teach and write-up two individual learning experiences/lessons either in the same or different subject areas. This lesson can be for either the whole class or a smaller group of students. The purpose of this assignment is to help you begin to internalize a set of questions to ask yourself as you plan lessons. Use the DeLeT ***Learning Experience/Lesson Plan Format*** to guide your planning.

Note: We are not expecting you to generate brand new activities for these lessons. This is an opportunity for you to co-plan (and teach) two lessons that are part of your mentor's ongoing curriculum, not created for this assignment.

A. Planning

- Co-plan 2 lessons using ***Learning Experience/Lesson Plan Format*** to guide your planning. You will primarily plan with your Mentor.
- Show plans to MT and FI. Revise as appropriate. Your Mentor and Field Instructor must approve your plans before you teach.

B. Teach your lessons (Good luck!)

C. As soon as possible after teaching, reflect on each lesson and jot down your thoughts

- What went well? Why?
- What do you think the children may have learned from the lesson? How do you know?
- What surprised you?
- What problems did you encounter? Thoughts about why?
- What might you do differently the next time (in planning and teaching)?

D. Write-up (3 – 4 pages)

Following the second learning experience, write a 3-4 page synthesis paper drawing on your experience, reflections, analysis. Looking across the two lessons, think about the relationships between **planning and teaching** and **teaching and learning**.

- What was most helpful in the planning phase? Where did you feel successful?
- What was the most challenging aspect of planning the lessons?
- Did anything occur during the lesson that you didn't anticipate? Could you have planned for it? What couldn't you have anticipated?
- What had you hoped students would learn? How do you know which students understood your content and which ones didn't?
- Consider DeLeT Teaching Standards 3: Knows subject matter for teaching and 4: Plans for Student Learning. What new understandings do you have about the meanings and challenges of those standards?
- What questions do you have now about planning? What experiences

- generated those questions?
- Include *Learning Experience/Lesson Plan Format* for each learning experience, the dates and times when the learning experiences were conducted and the number of students in the group.

Before our seminar on October 22, email your write-up and both lesson plans to Nili, your mentor, and your field instructor. Please title your documents as follows: your name_co-planning write up.doc, your name_ lesson plan 1.doc, your name_lesson plan 2.doc. Also bring these assignments (either on a laptop or a hard copy) to seminar.

Part 3: Planning and Teaching a Mini-Unit: Planning, Teaching, Assessing, Reflection Cycle

So far you have (a) studied your mentor's lesson planning and (b) planned and taught two individual lessons. Now it is time for you to practice planning on a larger scale by designing a mini-unit that you will teach during guided lead teaching. This also gives you a chance to demonstrate your beginning competence in planning. Our goal is to help you learn what you need to think about in doing the work of planning and to begin to develop the habit of doing that kind of thinking. Therefore, we are asking you to write up your planning in more detail than experienced teachers generally do.

A. Planning the Mini-Unit

Due dates:

- ***Questions to ask myself as I design a unit* worksheet: October 29th**
- **Mini-Unit Planning Format: November 5th**
- **First draft of Mini-Unit (includes revised Planning Format and lesson plans): November 19th**

For this assignment we are defining a mini-unit as 5-6 teaching sessions that are a coherent series of lessons with clearly defined learning goals and a final assessment. Whatever curriculum materials you use, (teacher made or other) you may add new activities and materials, but ideally you will start with something that exists. Your mini-unit should also be something that fits into your mentor teacher's curriculum and should not be something entirely new that does not grow out of the ongoing work in the classroom. It may be a part of a larger unit or stand alone.

The Fundamentals of Teaching course, your Field Instructor and your Mentor will all provide support for you to plan out this mini-unit.

In designing your unit, use the planning frameworks we've provided. *Questions to ask myself as I design a unit* outlines questions to think about in planning a unit. *Mini-Unit Planning Format* provides a framework for you to outline your unit and plan the sequence of lessons and *Learning experience/ Lesson Planning Format* outlines questions to think about as you plan your learning experiences in a more detailed way. We are asking you to write out your answers to these questions so that you get practice doing the kind of intellectual work that serious planning entails.

1. *Questions to ask myself as I design a unit:* Due: October 29th.
With support from your mentor teacher and field instructor complete form.

2. *Mini-Unit Planning Format:* Due: November 5th
Outline a first draft of learning activities on the "*Mini-Unit Planning Format*."
Include several paragraphs for each learning experience. What learning activities will students engage in? How will they be sequenced? Think about how the activities will prepare the students for a culminating activity. How will students demonstrate their understandings? **Plan one activity that will specifically support the learning needs of your study child.**

3. First draft of Mini-Unit:

Due: November 19th

Turn in a full draft of your mini-unit. This includes your most up-to-date *Mini-Unit Planning Format* as well as completed *Learning Experience/Lesson Plan Format* sheets for all of your mini-unit lessons. As you will receive feedback on this work, feel free to include questions or dilemmas that you face in your planning.

B. Revise the Mini-Unit and reflect on the planning process

Due: By Sunday, November 29 (may be determined individually with FI and Mentor, depending on date of implementation)

1. Final draft of Mini-Unit

Soon after turning in your mini-units on November 19, you will receive feedback. Carefully consider the feedback, revise your mini-unit, and turn in a revised version. After you have completed your revisions, MT and FI must sign off on your plans before you can begin to teach.

2. Reflection on the Planning Process (3-4 pages)

Write a short description and analysis of the process of co-planning. Choose **five** of the following questions that you believe will be most helpful to you as you reflect on this experience.

- How/why did you choose the focus of your mini-unit?
- How did you determine what content you were going to teach? How did you go about learning the content?
- What resources and/or curriculum materials did you consult, adapt or extend in planning this unit?
- What challenges or uncertainties did you face in planning this unit?
- What concerns do you have about implementing this unit in your class?
- How does the unit accommodate the diverse learners in your class?
- Looking at the facets of understanding from *Understanding by Design*, what ways of understanding does this unit address?

C. Teach your unit Mini-Unit (Enjoy ☺)

You should teach your mini-unit between December 1st and December 14th

1. Once your mini-unit is approved, you may teach it. Try to arrange for your mini-unit to be taught during “Guided Lead Teaching.” It might begin before or extend beyond, but we would like the mini-unit to be one of the things you do during “Guided Lead Teaching.”
2. Video-tape at least one of the mini-unit lessons. You will observe a video with your FI.

D. Analysis and reflection on Mini-Unit as Taught

Due: December 17th

Purpose: The purpose of this reflection is to provide an opportunity for you to *analyze* the process of planning and teaching your mini-unit and *articulate* your learning around planning for teaching.

Write-up

- **Analysis of Student Learning:** (2-3 pages) Your Mini-Unit as planned contained specific goals for student learning as well as ways to assess that learning. This section should include the results of your assessments. It should describe what you think your students have gained from the unit and what evidence supports your claims. Select three students who represent the achievement span for this mini-unit and present a few observations and/or samples of student work. Include your study child as one of the students. Describe the ways in which your assessments were more or less effective in obtaining evidence of student learning.

Evaluation: Your analysis of student learning will be reviewed using the following criteria:

- Is the evidence of student learning convincing?
 - Is the evidence of student learning related to the original goals of the unit?
 - Are the assessments analyzed for their effectiveness?
- **Final Reflection:** (3 - 4 pages) This section should include your analysis of strengths and weaknesses of this mini-unit both **as planned** and **as taught** and your synthesis of your learnings. Where appropriate, make specific connections to the DeLeT Teaching Standards and how your understanding of them has changed or developed.
 1. What did you learn about planning from this experience?
 - Did you make any changes in your plans prior to teaching/implementing each lesson? If so, why?
 - Did you make any changes during the lessons? Why?
 2. What did you learn about yourself as a teacher?
 3. What did you learn about the students you teach?
 4. What surprised you that you could have anticipated? What surprised you that you could not have anticipated?
 5. What would you do differently and why? Try to be specific and to draw on direct experiences and assessments of the students and of yourself.
 6. What questions have been generated for you through this process of planning and teaching?

Evaluation: Your final reflection will be reviewed using the following criteria

- Are each of the questions fully answered? (There may be some overlap.)
- Do the answers to questions connect specific experiences with more general or “bigger picture” ideas about planning and teaching?
- Are both strengths and weaknesses of the planning and teaching explored?

- Are there meaningful and convincing connections to the DeLeT Teaching Standards?

E. Prepare for Mini-Unit Fair
Due December 17

On December 17, we will have a “Mini-Unit Fair” in seminar where each student will create a display about his or her mini-unit. Make sure your display includes your enduring understandings, essential questions, information about your learning activities and assessments, and examples of student work. You will have about ten minutes to present your display. Be prepared to discuss the different aspects of the display and talk about what you would do differently if you were to re-teach the unit.